

ONE PROJECT

For the GOOD of

ENGLAND

THAT IS,

Our *CIVIL UNION* is our *CIVIL SAFETY*.

Humbly dedicated to the *Great Council*,

The Parliament of England.

RELIGION, as it is the noblest End of Man's Life, so it were the best Bond of *Humane Society*, provided Men did not err in the Meaning of that excellent Word. Scripture interprets it to be *Loving God above all, and our Neighbours as our selves*; but Practice teacheth us, that too many meerly resolve it into *Opinion and Form*; in which, not the *Text*, but the *Comment* too often prevails: whence it comes to pass that those *Bodies of Men*, who have but one *Common Civil Interest*, are miserably distrained in favour of their *advised Nations*, upon whom they are impatient to bestow an *Earthly Crown*. And this is the Reason of that Mischief and Uncertainty that attend Government. No sooner one *Opinion* prevails upon another (though all hold the *Text* to be sacred) but *Humane Society* is *shaken*, and the *Civil Government* must receive and suffer a *Revelation*: in so much, that when we consider the Fury and Unnaturalness of some People for Religion (which shews they have none that's True (Religion making Men most Natural as well as Divine) we have Reason to Bewail the *Mis-understanding* as well as *Mis-living* of that venerable Word.

But since 'tis so hard to disabuse men of their wrong Apprehensions of Religion, and the true Nature and Life of it, and consequently as yet too early in the day to fix such a Religion upon which Mankind will readily agree as a common Basis for Civil Society, we must recur to some lower but true Principle for the present, and I think there will be no Difficulty of succeeding.

'Tis this, *That Civil Interest is the Foundation and End of Civil Government*, and where it is not maintained entire the Government must needs decline. The word *INTEREST* has a good and bad Acceptation; when it is taken in an ill Sense, it signifies a *pursuit of Advantage without regard to Truth or Justice*; which I mean not: The

good signification of the word, and which I mean, is a *Legal Endeavour to keep Rights, or augment honest Profits*, whether it be in a private Person or a Society. By **GOVERNMENT**, I understand a *Just and Equal Constitution*, where *Might is not Right*, but *Laws rule*, and not the *Wills or Power of Men*; for that were plain *Tyranny*.

This Government must have a Supreme Authority in it self to Determine, and not to be Superceeded or Controuled by any other Power, for then it would not be a Government, but a Subjection, which is a plain Contradiction.

Having thus explain'd the Terms of the *Principle* I have laid down, I repeat it, viz. *That Civil Interest is the Foundation and End of Civil Government*, and prove it thus, The Good of the Whole is the Rise and End of Government, but the Good of the Whole must needs be the Interest of the whole, and Consequently the Interest of the whole is the Reason and End of Government. None can stumble at the Word Good, for every man may easily and safely Interpret that to himself, since he must needs believe; 'tis Good for him to be preserv'd in an undisturb'd Possession of his Civil Rights, according to the Free and Just Laws of the Land, and the Construction he makes for himself will serve his Neighbour, and so the whole Society.

But as the Good of the People is properly the Civil Interest of the People, and that, the Reason and End of Government; so is the Maintenance of that Civil Interest entire, the Preservation of Government. For where People are sure of their own, and are Protected from Violence or Injury, they chearfully yield their Obedience, and pay their Contribution to the support of that Government. But on the contrary, where men are Insecure of their Civil Rights, nay, where they are daily violated, and themselves in danger of Ruin, and that for no sin committed aginst the Nature of Civil Interest (to preserve which, Government was instituted) we ought to suppose their Affections will flagg, that they will grow dead-hearted, and that what they pay or do, may go against the Grain: And to say true, such Inclination is ready to tempt them to believe they should not of right Contribute to the Maintenance of such Governments as yield them no Security or Civil Protection. Which Unhappy Flaw in the Civil Interest, proves an untoward Crack in the Government; Men not being cordially devoted to the Prosperity of that Government, that is exercis'd in their Destruction; and how far that Fradition upon the Common Interest of the People may Affect the Government I cannot tell, but to be sure 'tis insecure to any Government, to have the People (in Strength) divided, as they will be, where their Interest is so disjoynted by the Government; One Protected, the Other Expos'd. Wherefore, Wise Governments have ever taken Care to preserve their People, as knowing they do thereby preserve their Interest, and that how Numerous their People, so large their Interest. For not only Solomon has told us, *That the Honour of a Prince is in the Multitude of his People*, but Experience teaches, that Plenty of People is the Riches and Strength of a Wise and Good Government; as that is, where Vice is corrected and Vertue encourag'd, and All taken in and secured in Civils, that have the same Civil Interest with the Government.

But as the Good and Interest of the Whole is the Rise and End of Government, so must it suppose, that the whole (which takes in all Parties) concurs in seeking the Good of the Government; for the Reason of the Government will not suffer it to protect those that are Enemies to its Constitution and Safety; for so it would admit of something dangerous to the Society, for the Security of which, Government was at first instituted.

It will follow, that those that own another temporal Power superior to the Government they properly belong to, make themselves Subjects not of the Government

ment they are born under, but to that Authority which they avow to be superior to the Government of their own Country, and consequently men of another Interest, because 'tis their Interest to pursue the Advantages of that Power they acknowledge to be sovereign: But those that own, embrace and obey the Government of their own Country as their temporal supream Authority, and whose Interest is one and the same with that of their own proper Government, ought to be valued and protected by that Government.

The Principle thus far lyes General, I will now bring it to our own Case.

ENGLAND is a Country Populous and Protestant, and though under some Dissents within it self, yet the Civil Interest is the same, and in some sense the Religious too. For first, all English Protestants, whether Conformists or Nonconformists agree in this, that they only owe Allegiance and Subjection unto the Civil Government of England, and offer any Security in their power to give of their Truth in this Matter; And in the next place, they do not only consequentially disclaim the Pope's Supremacy, and all adhesion to foreign Authority under any Pretence, but therewith deny and oppose the Romish Religion, as it stands degenerated from Scripture, and the first and purest Ages of the Church, which makes up a great Negative Union.

And it cannot be unknown to men read in the Reasons of the Reformation, that a Protestation made by the German Reformers against the Imperial Edicts of Charles the fifth, imposing Romish Traditions, gave beginning to the word Protestant.

In short; It is the Interest of the Ruling or Church-Protestants of England, that the Pope should have no Claim or Power in England. It is also the Interest of the Dissenting Protestants, that the Pope should have no Claim or Power here in England, because they are subject to the same Mischiefs and sufferings in their Civil and Religious Rights that the Church Protestants are liable to: if then both are like to lose by Pope and Foreign Authority, their Interest must needs be one against Pope and Foreign Authority, and if they have but one Interest, it will follow, that the Church Protestants cannot prejudice the Dissenting Protestant, but he must weaken and destroy his own Interest.

The Civil Interest of English Protestants being thus the same, and their Religious Interest too, so far as concerns a Negative to the Usurpation and Error of Rome; I do humbly ask, if it be the Interest of the Government, to expose those to Misery that have no other Civil Interest than THAT of the Government? Or if it be just or equal that the Weaker should be persecuted by the more Powerful Protestants, whose Interest is Positively the same in Civils, and in Religion Negatively? One would think 'twere Reasonable that they should not suffer by Protestants, who if Popery ever have a day, are likely to suffer with them, and that upon the same Principles. Experience tells us, That the wisest Architects lay their Foundations broad and strong, and raise their Squares and Structure by the most exact Rules of Art, that the Fabrick may be secure against the Violence of storms; but if People must be destroy'd by those of the same Interest, truly that Interest will stand but Tottering, and every breath of Opposition will be ready to shake it.

'Twas the Inconformable answer Christ made to the Blasphemers of that Power by which he wrought Miracles; A Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand: What he said then, let me on another occasion say now, an Interest divided against it self must fall.

I know some Men will take Fire at this, and by Crying The CHURCH, The CHURCH, hope to silence all Arguments of this Nature; But they must excuse me, if I pay no manner of Regard to their Zeal, and hold their Devotion both Ignorant and Dangerous at this time. It is not the way to fill the Church, to

Destroy the People. A Church without People is a Contradiction, especially when the Scripture tells us that 'tis the People that makes the Church.

And 'tis not without an appearance of Reason that some good & wise men are apprehensive, that the greatest *Sticklers* for Persecuting *Protestant Dissenters* in favour of the *Church of England*, are men addicted and devoted to the *Church of Rome*, or at least animated by such as are; who, disparaging of doing any great Feats, if known, hide themselves under these pretences; but the meaning of it is to debilitate the *Protestant* cause in general, by exciting the *Church of England* to destroy all other *Protestant* Interests in these Kingdoms, that so nothing may remain for *Popery* to conflict with but the few Zealous *abettors* of that Church.

And that this may not look disingenuous, or like a *Trick* of mine, I will enforce it by a demonstration. It is plain fact, that the *Church of Rome* hath ever since the Reformation practis'd the Restoration of her Religion and Power in these Kingdoms. It is as evident that *Religion* is with her a word for *Civil Interest*, that is, that she may have the Rule over men both *Body and Soul*. For 'tis Government she aims at, to have the reins of Power in her hand, to give Law and wield the Scepter.

To do this she must either have a greater interest then the *Protestants* that are now in possession, or else divide their Interest, and so weaken them by themselves, and make them Instruments to her ends. That her own force is Inconsiderable is clear: She has nothing within Doors to give her hope but the *Discord* of *Protestants*. It follows then that she must of necessity bestir her self and use her Arts to enflame the reckoning among *Protestants*, and carry their *Dissents* about *Religious* matters to a division in the *Civil Interest*. And it is the more to be fear'd, because whatever she has been to others, she has been ever true to her self.

If this then be the only domestick Expedient left her, we are sure she will use it; and if so, it must needs be of great Importance with all *Protestants* to let fall their private Animosities, and take all possible care that their *dissents* about Faith or Worship (which regard the other World) divide not their Affection and Judgment about the Common and Civil Interest of their Country: because if that be kept entire, it equally frustrates the designs of *Rome*, as if you were of one Religion. For since, as I said before, *Religion*, with the great men of that *Church*, is nothing else but a softer word for *Civil Empire*, preserve you but your Civil Interest from fraction, and you are in that sense of one Religion too; and that such an one, as you need not fear the temptation of *Smithfield*, if you will but be true to it.

This being the case, I would take leave to ask the Zealous Gentlemen of the *English Church*, If Conformity to the fashion of their worship be dearer to them then *Englands Interest* and the Cause of *Protestancy*? if their love to Church-Government be greater then to the Church and her Religion, and to their Country and her Laws? or lastly, whether in case they are sincere in their Allegations for the *Church* (which I confess ingenuously I am apt to suspect) it is to be supposed that the present *Church-men* (Conformists I mean) are better able of themselves to secure *Protestancy* and our *Civil Interest* against the Attempts of *Rome*, then in Conjunction with the *Civil Interest* of all *Protestant Dissenters*? If they say yes, I would have them at the same time, for the same reason, to give it under their Hands, that 'tis a standing Rule in *Arithmetick*, that ONE is more then SIX, and that hitherto we have been all mistaken in the art of Numbers.

Being brought to this pinch, I conceive they must say, that they had rather deliver up their *Church* to the Power and Designs of *Popery*, then suffer *Dissenters* to live freely among them, though *Protestant*, of one negative Religion; and of the same Civil Interest; or else hasten to break those bonds that are laid upon *Dissenters* of truly tender and (by experience) of peaceable Consciences; and by Law establish the free

free Exercise of their Worship to Almighty God, that the *Fears, Jealousies, Disaffection and Distraction*, that now affect the one common Interest of *Protestants*, may be removed; for it seems impossible to preserve a distinct Interest from both. But to which of these they may incline, I must not determine; and yet I hope, they will not be of the mind of a late *Monk of Cullen*, that in his publick Exercise exhorted the *Civil Magistrates* to chuse to have their City *poor and Catholick*, that is *Popish*, rather than *great and Opulent* by the Admission of *trading Hereticks*; but if they should, may our *Magistrates* have at least their Prudence; for the *Culleners* gave him the hearing, but were as *true to their Interest*, as the *Monk* to his *Superstition*.

Under favour, the *Civil Government* is greatly concern'd to discountenance such *Biggotrys*; for it *Thins* the People, *Lessens Trade*, *Creates Jealousies*, and *Endangers* the Peace and *Wealth* of the Whole. And with Submission, of what should the *Civil Magistrat* be more tender, than in suffering the Civil Interest of a great People to be disturb'd and narrow'd for the *Humor* of any one *Party* of them? for since the Civil Interest lies as large, as the People of that Interest, the people must be preserved in order to preserve that *Common Interest*. Other Notions ever did divide and weaken *Empire*, and in the end they have rarely mist to pull the Old House about their Ears, that have govern'd themselves by such disproportionable measures: By all means, interest the Affections of the People in the Prosperity of the Government, by making the Government a *SECURITY* to their perricular Rights and Properties.

I ask, if more Custom comes not to the King, and more Trade to the Kingdom by encouraging the Labour and Traffick of an *Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, Quaker and Anabaptist*, than by an *Episcopalian* only? If this be true, why should the rest be render'd incapable of Trade, yea, of Living? What *Schism* or *Heresy* is there in the Labour and Commerce of the *Anabaptist, Quaker, Independent and Presbyterian*, more than in the Labour and Traffick of the *Episcopalian*?

I beseech you give me leave, is there ever a *Church-man* in England, that in distress would refuse the Curtesie of one of these *Dissenters*? If one of them should happen to fall into a Pond or Ditch, would he deny to be helpt out by a *Dissenters Hand*? Is it to be supposed, he would in such a pickle be Stomachful, and chuse to lie there, and be Smother'd or Drowned, rather than owe Aid to the good Will of a poor *Phanatick*? Or if his House were on Fire, may we think that he would have it rather burnt to the ground, than acknowledge its Preservation to a *Non-conformist*? Would not the *Alt* be *Orthodox*, whatever were the Man? So in case of being *Sick, Imprison'd, Beset, Benighted, out of the Way, far from Kindred or Acquaintance*, with an hundred other cases that may happen daily, can we think, that such Men would ask Questions for Conscience sake, or charge *Schism* upon the *Relief* given them? No, no, *Self* will always be true to its *Interest*, let Superstition mutter what it will.

But since the *Industry, Rents and Taxes* of the *Dissenters* are as currant as their Neighbours, who loses by such narrowness more than *England*, than the Government and the Magistracy? For till it be the *Interest* of the *Farmer* to destroy his *Flock*, to starve the *Horse* he rides, and the *Cow* that gives him *Milk*, it cannot be the *Interest* of *England* to let a great part of her Sober & Useful Inhabitants be destroy'd about things that concern another World. And 'tis to be hop'd that the Wisdom and Charity of our *Governors* will better guide them both to their own real Interest and their Peoples Preservation, which are inseparable; that so they may not *Starve them for Religion*, that are as willing as able to *WORK* for the good of King and Country.

I beseech you, let *Nature* speak, who is so much a better Friend to Humane Society, than False or Froward Opinion, that she often rectifies the Mistakes of a Prejudiced

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Education, that we may say, how *Kind*, how *Gentle*, how *Helpful* does she teach us to be to each other, till that *Make-bate O P I N I O N* (falsly call'd *Religion*) begins the Jangle and Foments to Hatred.

All the Productions of Nature are by *Love*, and shall *Religion* propagate by *Force*? If we consider the poor *Hen*, she will teach us *Humanity*. Nature does not only learn her to hatch, but to be tender over her Feeble Chickens, that they may not be a Prey to the *Kite*. All the *Seeds* and *Plants* that grow for the Use and Nourishment of Man, are produced by the kind and warm influences of the *Sun*. Nothing but *kindness* keeps up *Humane* race: Men and Women don't get Children in *Spight*, but *Affection*. 'Tis wonderful to think by what Friendly and Gentle ways Nature produce, and matures the Creatures of the World: and that *Religion* should teach us to be *Froward* and *Cruel*, is Lamentable: This were to make her the *Enemy* instead of the *Restorer* of Nature. But I think, we may without Offence say, That since *True Religion* gives Men *Greater Mildness* and *Goodness* than they had before, that *Religion* which teaches them *less*, must needs be *False*. What shall we say then, but that even *Nature* is a truer guide to Peace, and better informs us to preserve *Civil Interest*, than *false Religion*, and consequently, that we ought to be true to the Natural and Just Principles of Society, and not suffer one of them to be violated for *Humor* or *Opinion*. Nor is every Difference in *Opinion* to be reputed or Nick-named a New or Different *Religion*.

Let us go together as far as our way lies, and Preserve our Unity in those Principles, which maintain our Civil Society. This is our Common and our Just Interest, all *Protestant-Dissenters* agree in this, and it is both Wise and Righteous to admit no Fraction upon this Pact, no Violence upon this Concord. For the consequence of permitting any thing to break in upon the Principles of *Humane* Society, that is *Forreign* to the Nature of it, will distract and weaken that Society.

We know, that in all *Plantations* the Wisdom of *Planters* is well aware of this: and let us but consider, that the same ways that plant Countries, must be kept so for preserving the *Plantation*, else 'twill quickly be *Depopulated*.

That Country which is False to its first Principles of Government, and mistakes or divides its *Common* and *Popular Interest*, must Unavoidably Decay. And let me say, That had there been this Freedom granted Eighteen Years ago, *Protestancy* had been too Potent for the Enemies of it; nor had there been those Divisions for *Papery* to make its advantage by; at least, not in the *Civil Interest* of the Nation. And where that has been preserv'd entire, it has been never able to Prevail: Witness the careful Government of *Holland*, where the Preservation of their Civil Interest from Fraction hath Secur'd them against the growth of *Papery*, though it be almost Tolerrated by them: So powerful are the Effects of an *United Civil Interest* in Government. Now because the *Civil Interest* of this Nation is the *Preservation of the Free and Legal Government of it from all Subjection to Forreign claim*, and that the several sorts of *Protestants* are united, as in the common *Protestancy* (that is, a *General Renunciation of Rome*) so in the Maintenance of this *Civil Government* as a common Security (for it strikes both at their Rights Civil and Sacred, their Conscience, Religion and Law to admit any *Forreign Jurisdiction* here) it must follow, that had these several, as well *English* as *Protestant* Parties been timely encourag'd to this united Civil Interest, they had secur'd the Government from this danger by rendering it too formidable for the Attempt.

But there is a twofold Mistake that I think fit to remove. *First*, That the difference betwixt *Protestants* & their *Dissenters* is generally manag'd, as if it were *Civil*. *Secondly*, The difference betwixt *Papist* & *Protestant* is carried on, as if it were chiefly *Religious*.

To the *First*, I say, 'Tis plausible, but false, it is an Artifice of ill men to enflame

flame the Government against good People, to make base Ends by other Mens Ruin; whereas they that dissent, are at a *Ne plus ultra* on the behalf of the English Government, as well as themselves. They neither acknowledge nor submit to any other Authority. They hold the one common Civil Head, and not only acquiesce in the Distribution of Justice by Law; but embrace it as the best part of their *Patri-mony*. So that the difference between *Protestants* and their *Dissenters* is purely *Religious*, and mostly about *Church-Government*, and some *Forms* of Worship, apprehended to be not so pure and *Apostolical* as could be desired; and here it is, that *Tendernefs* should be exercis'd, if in any case in the World, or *St. Paul* is Mistaken.

But as to the *Second*, under Correction, the case is alter'd, for though it be most ly manag'd on the side of *Religion*, The great Point is meerly *Civil*, and should never be otherwise admitted or understood. For want of this caution *Protestants* suffer themselves to be drawn into tedious Controversies about Religion, and give occasion to the *Professors* and *Favourers* of that way to exclaim against them, as *Persecutors* for Religion, who had reprobated such Severity in the *Papists* to their *Ancestors* (a most plausible and very often a successful *Plea*) when in reality the difference is not so much *Religious* as *Civil*. Not but that there is a vast *contrariety* in Doctrine and Worship too; but this barely should not be the cause of our so great distance, and that Provision the Laws make against them; but rather that *Fundamental inconsistency* they carry with them to the *Security* of the *English Government* and *Constitution*, unto which they belong, by acknowledging a Forreign Jurisdiction in these Kingdoms. So that drawing into Question and Danger the *Constitution* and *Government*, to which *Scripture*, and *Nature* and *Civil Pact* oblige their Fidelity and Obedience, there seems a *Discharge* upon the *Civil Government* from any further care of their Protection, that make it a piece of *Conscience* to seek its Ruin, and which is worse, a *Principle*, not to be informed of better things, for even here not Reason or Law, but the Pope must be Judge.

This being the Brief and Modest state of the Case, I must return to my first great Principle, That *Civil Interest* is the Foundation and End of *Civil Government*; and that how much Men desert the Interest of a Kingdom, so much they wound and Subvert the Government of it. I appeal to all Wise and Considerate Men of the Truth of this by the present Posture of Affairs and their proper Causes.

To come then to our Point, Shall English Men by *English Men*, and *Protestants* by *Protestants* be Free or Opprest? That is, whether shall we receive as English men and *Protestants*, those that have no other Civil Interest than that which is purely *English*, and who sincerely profess and embrace the same *Protestation*, for which the *Antient Reformers* were stiled *Protestants*, or for the sake of *Humour* or *Base Ends* disown them, and expose them and their Families to utter misery?

I would hope better of our great Church-mens Charity and Prudence; but if they should be so unhappy as to keep to their old measures, and still play the Gawdy but empty Name of *Church* against the *Civil Interest* and *Religion* of the Nation, they will shew themselves deserted of God, and then how long it will be, before they will be seen and left of all sober men, let them Judge. For to speak freely, after all this *Light* that is now in the world, no *Ignorance* can excuse such Zeal, nor will wise men believe it to be either, but a *Trick* to weaken *Protestancy*, that her declared *Enemy* may with less hazard gain the *Chair*. And there is not so much reason to fear *Protest Roman Catholics*, as those *Gentlemen*, who valuing themselves by their respects to the *Church* and tendernefs of her *Independent* honour, have the opportunity with less suspicion of letting in *Popery* at the Back-door. These

are the men that pay off the *Phanatick* in the Name of the Church, but for the good of the Pope, to whose account those endeavours must be placed.

But it will go a great way to our Deliverance if we are not Careless to observe the *Secret* workings of those that have vow'd our Misery, & of them such, as are in *Misckarade*, and wear the *Guize* of Friends are most Dangerous: But some Men are *Pur-blind*, they can see Danger as near as their *Nose*, but in a Difficulty, that is not a *Foot* from them, they are *Presumptive*, *Rusty* and not to be govern'd. Could some *Church-men* but see the Irreparable Mischiefs that will attend them (if sincere to their present Profession) unless prevented by a *Moderate and Christian condescension* to Dissenting Protestant Christians, they would never suffer themselves to be Mis-guided by *Stiff* and *Rigid* Principles at this time of day.

If *Christianity*, that most Meek and Self denying Religion, cannot prevail upon them, me thinks the Power of Interest, and that *Self-interest* too, should have some Success for in those cases they use not to be obstinate.

But I expect it should be told me, *That this is the way to Ruin the Church, and let in an Anarchy in Religion: Cujus contrarium verum.* I am glad to obviate this, before I leave you, seeing the Contrary is most true; for it leaves the *Church and Church-men* as they are, with this Distinction, that whereas now Conformity is *Coercive*, which is *Popish*, it will be then *Perswasive*, which is *Christian*. And there may be some hopes, when the *Parsons*, destitute of the Magistrates Sword, shall of necessity enforce their Religion by good Doctrine and holy Living; nor ought they to murmur, for that which satisfied Christ and his Apostles should satisfy them: *His Kingdom is not of this World*, therefore they should not *Fight* for him, if they would be his *Servants* and the *Children* of his *Kingdom*, Christ and not Civil Force is the Rock his Church is built upon. Nor indeed has any thing so *Tarnish'd* the Cause of *Protestancy*, as the Professors of it betaking themselves to *Worldly Arms* to propagate their Religion. *David* could not wear *Saul's* Armor, and true *Protestants* cannot use *Popish* Weapons, *Imposition* and *Persecution*. In short; 'Tis the very Interest of the Church of *England*, to preserve the Civil Interest entire, or else *Popery* will endanger all; but that cannot be unless all of that Civil Interest be preserved; therefore *Protestant-Dissenters* should be indulg'd.

But some will say, *There is a Difference even among Dissenters; Some will give a Security to the Civil Government by taking the Oaths; others will not, and be it through Tenderness, how do we know, but Papists will shrow'd themselves under the Wings of such Dissenters, and so in Tolerating Protestant Dissenters to fortify Protestantism, in reality Popery will be hereby shelter'd incognito.*

I Answer, First, That such *Oaths* are little or no Security to any Government, and though it may give some *alloy* to the *Jealousie* of *Governors*, they never had the Effect desired. For neither in Private Cases, nor yet in Publick Transactions have Men adher'd to their *Oaths*, but their *Interest*. He that is a *Knave*, was never made *Honest* by an *Oath*: nor is it an *Oath*, but *Honesty*, that keeps *Honest* men such. Read Story and consult our Modern Times, tell me what Government stood the firmer or longer for them? Men may take them for their own Advantage, or to avoid Loss and Punishment: But the Question is, What real Benefit, or Security comes thereby to the Government? It is certain they have often *ensnared* a *Good Man*, but never caught one *Knave* yet: we ought not to put so great a Value upon *Oaths*, as to render the Security of our Government so low and hazardous.

God's Providence and the Wisdom of our Ancestors have found out a better Test for us to rest upon, and that is our *Common Interest* and the *Laws of the Land* DULY executed: These are the Security of our Government.

For example, a *Man* Swears he will not Plot, yet Plots; pray what Security is this

this *Oath* to the Government? But though 'tis evident, that this be no Security; that *Law* which *Hangs* him for Plotting, is an *unquestionable one*. So that 'tis not for wise Governours, by Swearing men to the Government to think to secure it; but all having agreed to the *Laws*, by which they are to be governed, *let any Man break them at his Peril*. Wherefore good *Laws*, and a Just Execution of them, and not *Oaths*, are the *Natural* and *real Security* of a Government.

But next, though some may scruple the *Oaths*, 'tis not for the sake of the Matter so much as Form, which you know is not the case of *Roman Catholics* (pray distinguish) and those very Persons, whoever they be of *Protestant-Dissenters*, I dare say, they will very cheerfully promise their Allegiance on the same Penalties, and subscribe any *Renunciation of Pope and Foreign Authority*, which the *Art of man can Pen*; nor should it be hard for you to believe they should subscribe what they have always liv'd.

To that part of the Objection, which mentions *the danger of Papists concealing themselves under the Character of Protestant Dissenters*; under Favour I say, it is most reasonable to believe, that those who will deny their Faith upon record, as those that subscribe your *Declaration* do, will swallow the *Oaths* too; for the *Declaration* flatly denies the Religion, but the *Oaths* only the *Pope's Supremacy*, which even some of themselves pretend to reject. Therefore those that can sincerely subscribe the *Declaration*, cannot be *Papists*.

If it be yet objected, that *Papists* may have *Dispensations* to subscribe the *Test*, or a *Pardon*, when they have done it; I answer, they may as well have *Dispensations* to take the *Oaths* or *Pardons* when they have taken them, and these last six Moneths prove as much. There is no Fence against this Flail: At this rate they may as well be *Protestants*, as *Protestant-Dissenters*, *Ministers* or *Bishops* in Churches, as *Speakers* or *Preachers* in *Meeting-houses*: Nay, 'tis more probable, where there is least Suffering, and most Preferments. But this Objection only shews the weakness of both *Oaths* and *Declaration* for the Purpose intended, and not, that they can hide themselves more under one People than another. For they that can have a *Dispensation* or *Pardon* for one act, can have it for another, especially when the matter of the *Declaration* is of a more general weight to them, than that of the *Oaths*; all which confirms my former Judgment of the Insecurity of such *Oaths* to any Government.

Give me leave then upon this to ask you, if you will bring a certain Ruin upon any *Protestant-Dissenters* for the sake of such an *uncertain Security* to your selves? for this is the Question; I beseech you to weigh it as becomes wise and good men, shall they be Reprobated for tenderly refusing, what being perform'd, cannot save or secure you?

Consider, you have no reason to believe, but those that are allow'd to subscribe the *Declaration*, or that will be pardon'd, when they have done it, may be allow'd to take the *Oaths*, or will be pardon'd and absolv'd, when they have taken them: but you are certain on the other side, that the Imposing of the *Oaths* will be a great Snare to many *Protestant-Dissenters*, that love the Government, and renounce both *Pope* and *Papery*; They will be ruin'd, which to me is of the nature of an Argument for those People: for their not taking the *Oaths*, proves plainly, they have no *Dispensations* nor hopes of *Absolution*, and therefore no *Papists*; shall they then lie under the Severities intended against *Papists*, who have none of their *Dispensations* or *Absolutions* to deliver them from them? This is (with Submission, but in plain terms) to make the case of the Kingdom worse; for it destroys those who are not Guilty, and whom, I believe, you would not destroy.

Having brought the matter to this, I shall first offer you a new *Test*; Next, the ways of taking it, with most aggravation against the Party rejecting or breaking it; And lastly, how you may secure your selves from *Papists* disguizing themselves among *Protestant-Dissenters*; that so nothing may remain a *Remora* in the way, that shall not be removed, to leave you a plain and even Path to Peace and Safety.

C

The

The New TEST.

I A. B. do solemnly and in good Conscience, in the sight of God and Men, acknowledge and declare, that King Charles the second is Lawful King of this Realm, and all the Dominions thereunto belonging. And that neither the Pope nor See of Rome, nor any else by their Authority have Right in any Case to Depose the King, or Dispose of his Kingdom, or upon any score whatever to absolve his Subjects of their Obedience, or to give leave to any of them to Plot or Conspire the Hurt of the King's Person, his State or People; and that all such Pretences and Power are False, Pernicious and Damnable. And I do further sincerely profess, and in good Conscience declare, that I do not believe, that the Pope is Christ's Vicar, or Peter's Lawful Successor, or that He or the See of Rome severally or jointly are the Rule of Faith or Judge of Controversie, or that they can absolve Sins: Nor do I believe, there is a Purgatory after Death, or that Saints should be pray'd to, or Images in any sense be worship'd. Nor do I believe, that there is any Transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper, or Elements of Bread and Wine as or after the Consecration thereof by any Person whatsoever. But I do firmly believe, that the Present Communion of the Roman-Catholick Church is both Superstitious and Idolatrous. And all this I do acknowledge, intend, profess and declare without any Equivocation, or reserv'd, or other Sense, than the plain and usual Signification of these words, according to the real Intention of the Law-makers and the common Acceptation of all true Protestants.

This is the Test I offer; large in Matter, because comprehensive of Oaths and Test too, yet brief in words.

The next thing is the Wayes of taking it with most Aggravation upon the Refusers or Violators of it.

1. That in all Cities and great Towns, notice be given by the Magistrates thereof to the Inhabitants of every Ward or Parish to appear on such a day, be it New-Years-Day, or Ash-Wednesday rather (when the Pope Curses all Protestants) at their publick Hall or other places of Commerce, where the Magistrates shall first openly Read, Subscribe & Seal the Test. Then that it be read again by the proper Officer of the Place to the People, and that those that take it, do audibly pronounce the words after him that reads it, and when they have so done, that they subscribe and seal it. That such Subscriptions be Register'd, and Copies of each Parish's Subscription transmitted to the Parish, and Affix upon some publick Place for all that will to see.

That in the Countries the Parishes of each Hundred or Rape may be likewise summon'd to appear upon the Day aforesaid at the head-Market Town in the said Hundred or Rape, and that the Justices of the Peace within that part of the Country shall first read, subscribe and seal the said Test in view of the People, and then that the People say, subscribe and seal the Test, as is before express. Which being done, let the said Subscriptions be collected into one Volume, and kept in the County Court as a Book of Record; and that to each Parish be transmitted a Copy of the said Parish's Subscription, to be affix upon some publick Place within the said Parish for all to see, that please.

Lastly, Let this be done Annually, that is, upon every New-Years Day or Ash-Wednesday, as a perpetual Testimony of the Peoples Affection to the King and Government, and their Abhorrence of the Practices of Rome.

The Abuse of this Discrimination should be very Penal; for 'tis a great Lye upon a Man's own Conscience and a Cheat put upon the Government: Your Wisdom can best proportion and direct the Punishment; but it can scarcely be too severe, as our Business stands.

But

But as in case of such Hypocrisie a severe Penalty should be inflicted, so pray let Provision be made, that if any Person so subscribing should be afterwards call'd by the Name of *Jesuit* or *Papist*, without very good Proof, it should be deem'd and punish'd in open Sessions for a *Slander* and *Breach of Peace*, yet so, as that the Penalty may be remitted at the Request of the *Abused Party*.

I should think that this business, carefully done, might render needless my Answer to the last Objection, viz. *Which Way shall we be able to prevent Papists from passing for Protestant Dissenters, that so the Security propounded to the Government be not baffled by Disguize?* For no *Papist* can subscribe this but he will Lye in the Face of the Government and Country, and that *rearly*, and upon *Record* too; which is ten times more then a *Transient Oath*, mutter'd with one word *spoken*, and another *dropt*: However, that we may carry it as far as humane Prudence can go, —

I yet offer two *Expedients*;

First, That upon Jealousie of any Persons being a *Papist*, or *Popishly inclined*, who is known to frequent the Assemblies of *Protestant Dissenters*, Four of that *Party* of most Note and Integrity, unto which he pretends to adhere, should be summoned to appear before those *Justices* of the Peace, unto whom the Complaint is made, to testify their Knowledge of the Person suspected, his *Education*, *Principles* and *Manner of Life*; which way of Inspection, as it goes as far as Man can reach, so can it scarcely fail; for those Persons will not only discover their own *Hypocrisie* if they conceal him, but expose themselves and their Friends to Ruin. So that to say true, the Government has the *Interest* and *Security* of an *Entire Party*, for the discovery of every such *suspected Person*.

But if this will not do, then

Secondly, Be you pleased to refer the Discrimination of suspected Persons to the good old way of the Government; that is, the Inquiry and Judgment of *Twelve Men of the Neighbourhood*, to wit, a *Jury*; provided always, that they be such as have taken or will themselves take the *Test*; else, that they may be *Exceptable* by the *Party suspected*.

Indeed a good Expedient may be made out of both, for the *first* may be the *Evidence* to the *last*, and I think you will hardly fail of your Ends.

I shall conclude with this Request, First to *Almighty God*, that he would please to make us truly and deeply sensible of his present Mercies to us, and to reform our Hearts and Lives to improve them thankfully. And Secondly to you, that we may be loving, humble and diligent one to and for another; for as from such Amendments we may dare promise great and suddain Felicity to *England*, so if *Looseness* in Life, and *Bitterness* in Religion be not speedily reprehended and reform'd, and the *Common Civil Interest* maintained entire, God will, I justly fear, repent he has begun to do us good, *Adjourn* the Day of our Deliverance to that of our Repentance and Moderation, and *Overcast* these happy Dawnings of his Favour by a thick and dismal Cloud of Confusion and Misery; which GOD AVERT!

These things that I have written, are no wild *Guesses* or *May-be's*, but the *Disease* and *Cure*, the *Danger* and *Safety* of *England*; in treating of which, that God that made the *VWorld* knows, I have not gratified any private Spleen or Interest (for I am sorry of the Occasion) but singly and conscientiously intended his Honor, and the lasting Good of *England*, to which all *Personal* and *Party* Considerations ought ever to submit.

Amicus Plato, Amicus Aristoteles, sed magis Amica Veritas, i. e. Anglia.

Your own Faithful and Most Affectionate

PHIL' ANGLUS.